



UK Research
and Innovation

UK Research and Innovation Equality Impact Assessment Form



*See guidance document for detailed support.

* Delete the guidance text in the response column when completing your EIA.

Overview of activity

	Response
Name of activity being assessed	Enabling AI adoption across science and engineering
Council/department/project team	EPSRC – AI & Robotics Activity delivered as part of UKRI IS8 AI Programme
Aims and objectives of the activity	The purpose of this one-year, cross-UKRI investment, is to support ambitious and exploratory projects that bring together AI and domain expertise to unlock new opportunities for applying artificial intelligence (AI) to important research challenging in priority science and engineering disciplines. Funding will support ~20 (£200,000 – 80% FEC) grants focussed on supporting communities to identify, understand and access AI capabilities to transform their research approach and accelerate scientific discoveries, along with scoping the need for new AI tools in collaboration with AI scientists. This investment will: 1. Drive the development and wider adoption of AI capabilities across research fields, which will help to accelerate scientific discovery in the UK. 2. Strengthen collaboration between AI specialists and domain researchers, enabling the development of new interdisciplinary approaches and emerging research themes. 2. Speed up the embedding of AI as a research tool in a fair and inclusive way, complementing UKRI's ongoing work in this area. 3. Develop researchers' understanding and practical capability to use AI tools and methods effectively within their disciplines, supporting responsible and informed adoption across the research system. 4. Ensure sustainability and legacy by establishing the skills, collaborations and resources needed for continued AI adoption after the programme ends, enabling long-term impact across the UKRI portfolio. This opportunity will be using distributed peer review (DPR) to process applications.
Who is affected by your policy/funding activity/event?	Applicants, UKRI and EPSRC staff involved in the funding activity's delivery.

What data and consultation have you used?	Previous funding opportunities' lessons learnt with EPSRC especially the learnings from a previous opportunity which was used to directly inform this opportunity. The design of the awards has been informed by similar opportunities delivered across UKRI's remit, including outputs from the monitoring and reporting undertaken. It also draws upon: • EPSRC equality, diversity, and inclusion action plan 2022 to 2025 – UKRI • The UK government's ambitions for AI in the UK, laid out in the AI Opportunities Action Plan and DSIT AI for Science strategy. Learning on equality implications arising from the use of DPR will be captured on an ongoing basis through AI and Robotics opportunities implementing DPR, including Next Generation AI: Explainable AI, and will be used to inform the development and delivery of this opportunity.
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Analysing your impact

In addition to data gathering and consultation, the guidance materials should be used to assist in identifying impacts on different groups.

Protected characteristics

Protected characteristic	Positive impact or opportunity to benefit	Negative impact	Please explain the impact or why there is no impact including details of any evidence/data used	Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible). Detail how you plan to measure the
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	Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown			relevant outcomes and outputs of your activity.
Age	☒	☐	Age may not be a robust indicator of a career-stage however due to the nature and size of the grant we expect to target early to mid-career researchers.	
Disability	☒	☐	All information provided is in written format. Information will be accessible via screen readers if appropriate.	Reasonable adjustments for specific requirements will be made. Standard EPSRC policies will be followed.
Gender reassignment (Trans identity)	☐	☐		
Marriage or civil partnership	☐	☐		
Pregnancy and maternity	☐	☒	Participation in activity could be restricted by lack of availability during the application process, due to parental leave / caring responsibilities / pregnancy.	Reasonable adjustments will be made for individuals if required at all stages of the process. Timetable of key dates will be made available to applicants as early as possible.
Race	☐	☐		
Religion or belief	☐	☐		
Sexual orientation	☐	☐		
Sex	☐	☐		



Additional characteristics

Additional characteristics	Positive impact or opportunity to benefit	Negative impact	Please explain the impact including details of any evidence/data used	Detail actions taken/ that will be taken to increase positive or reduce negative impact (or why action is not possible).
	Leave blank if there is no impact or unknown			
Geographical location and place (consider UK and international offices)	☐	☐		
Socio-economic status	☐	☐		
Education background	☐	☐		
Parent/guardian responsibilities	☐	☒	Applicants may have reduced availability/ higher workload as a result of the distributed peer review due to parenting responsibilities.	Timetable of key dates will be made available to applicants as far in advance as possible. To mitigate for this to an extent, we are allowing two members from the applicant team to act as a reviewer.
Carer/parent carer responsibilities	☐	☒	Applicants may have reduced availability/ higher workload as a result of the distributed peer review due to caring responsibilities.	Timetable of key dates will be made available to applicants as far in advance as possible.

				To mitigate for this to an extent, we are allowing two members from the applicant team to act as a reviewer.
Political opinion (Northern Ireland only)	☐	☐		
Other characteristics	☐	☐		

Are there general or overarching impacts on multiple groups? What actions will you take to increase positive impact, or reduce/mitigate negative impact?	EPSRC has maximised the period the opportunity is open. The grant will be awarded for 1 year. A distributed peer review approach will be used to accelerate review process. The opportunity will be open over a UK school half term holiday and will be open for 9 weeks (recommended minimum opening time is 8 weeks) to accommodate this. We will be employing distributed peer review for the assessment process in this call. This means all applicants will also be acting as peer reviewers. This has the potential for a negative impact as it will mean the PL will have a higher than normal workload To mitigate for this to an extent, we are allowing one other member from the applicant team to act as a reviewer. This approach should ensure that applicants receive more high-quality reviews. We will be holding a webinar where we will give potential applicants the opportunity to ask questions about the funding opportunity and the Distributed Peer Review process. We will also deliver reviewing guidance to applicants at this webinar. This guidance will cover issues including fairness, objectivity and unconscious bias. Peer reviewers will be required to evidence their views and scores. EPSRC staff will conduct usability checks on all peer review comments and where there is evidence of bias, or a reviewer has failed to provide evidence for their scores the review will be marked as 'unusable'. EPSRC staff members will be briefed on unconscious bias and empowered to constructively challenge potential bias where they identify it.
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Evaluation

Final Decision:	Select the relevant box	Include any explanation / justification required
1. No negative or positive impact identified; therefore, activity will proceed .	☐	
2. Adapt or change the activity in a way which you think will eliminate negative impact or promote equality.	☒	Process has been put in place to minimise all negative impacts. EPSRC will proceed and the impacts will continue to be monitored as the activity develops. This EIA document will be updated if required.
3. Stop the activity because the evidence shows bias or negative impact towards one or more groups.	☐	
4. Barriers and impact identified, however having considered all available options carefully, there appear to be no other proportionate ways to achieve the activity (e.g. in extreme cases or where positive action is taken). Therefore, you are going to proceed with caution with this activity knowing that it may favour some people less than others, providing justification for this decision.	☐	

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Review and sign off

What are the arrangements for monitoring and reviewing the impact of your activity?	An EIA is a live document and should regularly be reviewed throughout the life cycle of an activity.
Next review date:	

Will this EIA be published? * Yes/Not required	Yes
Point of contact	Team inbox: AI.Robotics@epsrc.ukri.org Trishna Raj: Trishna.raj@epsrc.ukri.org
Signed off by (name and date):	Beth Turner - Head of AI for Science (21-08-26)

Before publishing or archiving your EIA, please remove any sensitive or confidential information such as personal identifiable data.

Once your EIA is completed or updated:

1. Upload it to the UKRI central repository via [the EIA submission form](#)

EIAs for ODA and non-ODA ISPF programmes should be emailed to: ISPF@ukri.org

Change log



Name	Date	Version	Change

Continued below...



Action plan

Use the table below to define the actions you intend to take (or have taken) to address the indications of negative impact you have identified or to promote equality. Actions should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound).

Action	Deadline	Owner	How will it be monitored?	What is/will be the impact/outcome?